

Sport Talk

by Ron Sykes, Sports Editor

For the Portland Trailblazers the moment of truth is at hand. In this 1983-83 season there are few tomorrows left. They must now look the Tiger in the eye, reach down in the well one more time, and hope like the dickens that the well's not dry. There are four games left in this battle with Denver and Kansas City for the last two playoff spots. The Blazers, two months ago seemingly a cinch, must now struggle, scratch and crawl if they are to gain that berth. Oh, sure, if one should peruse the schedule it does appear that the Blazers hold the upper hand. They have Golden State and San Diego left this week, both teams with losing records. They then must travel to L.A. for the season finale on Sunday, April 17th.

Portland should have little trouble with Golden State, a troubled team sporting a dismal 28-50 record. But one should also remember it was this same rag-tag Warriors that handily defeated the 43-35 Blazers when the (Blazers) were in a dog-fight with Seattle for the fourth playoff position. But that was yesterday. The Sonics finally woke up from their mid-season dream and now are playing like a championship contender.

The Sonics have now won 13 of their last 14, they're 47-31, playing good sound basketball and will make the Western playoffs exciting again.

So, where does all this leave Portland?

After the smoke clears Jack Ramsay should have his sixth playoff team in his seven years in the Rose City. Missing only last year when his team choked, sputtered and collapsed after getting off to a good start. What lies ahead for the Blazers if they should make the playoffs is not very encouraging.

What's out there lurking in the shadows is the Phoenix Suns. And that's bad news. Portland has beaten the Suns only one time in six meetings. And that one only when Walter Davis was injured and being played in the friendly confines of Memorial Coliseum.

Around town this week most talk has been about whether or not the Blazers will make the playoffs. So what if they do. The Portland Trailblazers can hardly be expected to go anywhere even if they should make post season play. Except for the '76-'77 championship year the team has never survived the mimiseries. Even if they should make it this year, they can hardly expect to whip the potent Phoenix Suns. Why? This is just a mediocre Trailblazer squad. In order to be successful, a good team should have more than two players sharing the scoring. The Phoenix Suns have Larry Nance, 18.6; Alvan Adams, 15.1; Maurice Lucas, 18.1;

Dennis Johnson, 15.2 and Walter Davis, 20.5, all scoring in double figures.

Jack Ramsay has been comfortable in running plays for only Jim Paxson and Calvin Natt, and has strongly taken Mychal Thompson out of the offense.

While Pax and Calvin are both good scorers, two men just cannot carry a team in today's NBA. And the way Coach Ramsay treats his starting players after coming off injuries is absurd.

Most coaches around the league will not permit a player to lose his starting status due to injury. If you were in the starting lineup when the injury occurred, when ready to play you go right back... regardless of how well your replacement played.

In Phoenix all-star guard Dennis Johnson missed six games due to an injured ankle, while reserve Kyle Macy played extremely well during Johnson's absence he had to take a seat once Johnson returned. Darnell Valentine is probably wondering why he's now relegated to a reserve role. It's got to be shattering the young man's confidence.

If Portland is a better than mediocre team, as Harry Glickman would have us believe, then just what is wrong?

Ray Williams, long-time Portland barber, and astute Blazer fan, said this: "I believe it's the lack of team defense, and togetherness. Some players are looking to score themselves on offense and completely giving up on the defensive end."

This could be true at the guard position. Jim Paxson at 6-6 has 168 rebounds in 77 games, while the 6-1 Valentine has collected 105 in just 43 games.

But even more astonishing is that Rooke Fats Lever, 6-4, has grabbed 211 boards, while playing far fewer minutes.

The contending teams—L.A., Phoenix, Seattle and San Antonio—all get adequate rebounding help from their big guard.

While Phoenix sends the 6-4 Johnson to the boards for help, Ramsay is sending Paxson down court hoping for an easy fast break basket.

Since the other team's big guard usually is matched against Paxson, and scouting reports tell them Pax will release early, the opposing team's big guard is free to hit the offensive boards, while the speedier point guard can drop back to cover the break.

Wouldn't the smaller, quicker point guard by the logical choice to release early? And wouldn't the big guard be more *a propo* in helping on the boards? And isn't Jack Ramsay the best coach in the NBA?

Thanks to good friends George



Kareem Abdul-Jabbar outreaches Blazer Walter Cooper but failed to save the April 7 game for the Lakers. Portland 107, Los Angeles 101. (Photo: Dan Long)

"Jr." Speller and Chuck Hammon, yours truly ventured down to the Marriott hotel to see a boxing card presented by Dolores McNalley. The main event featured an over-the-hill heavyweight match between Scott Ledoux and Ken Arlt. Maybe it would be unfair to put Arlt in the over-the-hill class because the (12-9) Portland fighter has yet to even make it to the hill. Arlt lasted the full ten rounds and was impressive at times. But the heavier and more experienced Canadian had the best of things from rounds one to ten.

Except for a cut opened by LeDoux's head butt, there was little damage done to either fighter. Arlt, out of Grant High School, was the aggressor throughout. The crafty Canadian, however, refused to be tagged by Arlt's wild, looping right hand and threw very few punches himself. LeDoux stated earlier that this was a good way to get a workout, and that's just what it was. And

why not get paid along the way. It appears that Ms. McNally has a good thing going at the Marriott. The crowd was good—an estimated 1500 plus and the atmosphere great.

The fight crowd seemed knowledgeable but a little rowdy at times. While this card was mediocre I'm told that most of them are much better. The semi-finals matching bantam Bryan Tinker (9-3) against Montana's Willie Montana (1-0-1) supply the crowd with more than ample action.

Willie Montana, making his debut in Portland, was really impressive. He displayed a loose boxing style packed with plenty of power. From the opening bell the young man from Montana quickly established his superiority by belting Tinker with two quick punishing right hands. Montana so dominated that the referee called it off after five rounds.

Cuba-12, U.S.A.-0

A strong Cuban boxing team smashed the U.S.A. team 12 to 0 in Havana Saturday. Five U.S. boxers were knocked out.

Only Clifford Gray (132) and Craig Payne (201+) of the U.S. offered any resistance to the Cuban fighters. Gray stayed in with two-time Olympic champion Angel Herrera and lost a decision. Payne floored super-heavyweight Jorge Gonzalez but Gonzalez returned to demolish the unfortunate Payne.

Jose Rosario, considered the U.S.A.'s best 106-pounder, never came close to Cuba's 18-year-old world champion, Rafael Sainz, and Michael Collins (112) could not reach Cuban newcomer Pedro Reyes. Sherman Griffen (178) fell before Pablo Romero and Henry Tillman was no match for Hermengildo Baez.

U.S.A.'s 147-pound world champion Mark Breland was not available because of sore hands. Also missing was super-heavyweight Tyrell Biggs, who is still nursing broken ribs suffered during his 2nd-round knockout by Cuba's Teofilo Stevenson in Reno.

Cuba fielded several new fighters. Candelario Duvergel, who made his international debut with a defeat by Breland in Reno, easily decisioned Ron Essett. Stevenson, attempting a comeback after a severe automobile accident injury following the 1980 Olympic games, was out with a sore foot.

Stevenson's second, Angel Millan, has retired—giving his spot behind Stevenson to Gonzalez. Gonzalez, 21, has boxed internationally since 1980 and won the North American Finals in 1982, decisioning Warren Thompson of the U.S.A.

The match was the tenth in a series—all won by Cuba.

Salazar loses

Alberto Salazar, former U. of O. runner, suffered his first marathon defeat in Rotterdam, The Netherlands. Australia's Robert de Castella finished in 2:08:37, short of Salazar's record. Salazar, who dropped behind in the last mile, finished fifth with 2:10:08.

No new record

Mila Boit of Kenya ran the fastest mile in history at 3:28:36 Sunday—19 seconds faster than the official world record set by Sebastian Coe in 1981 (3:47:33). The run, which took place in Auckland, New Zealand, will not count as an official record because the course is downhill.

Attention Kathy Lorenz

I've been looking all over town for you. I can't seem to find you anywhere. I want you to know we care about you.

Call Mr. Bill

Notice Of Public Hearing

Notice is hereby given that upon request by any interested person a public hearing will be held by the Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon (Tri-Met) at the Tri-Met Administration Building, 4012 S.E. 17th Avenue, Portland, Oregon at 10:00 a.m. on Monday, May 16, 1983 for the purpose of considering Tri-Met's interest to utilize \$1,288,000 of Tier IV Capital Assistance funds available under Section 5 of the Urban Mass Transportation Act (UMT Act) of 1964, as amended, for operating assistance with a discount penalty of \$644,000. Because of the availability of other federal capital assistance funds under Section 3 and Section 9(A) of the UMT Act of 1964, as amended, this transfer of funds will not jeopardize the agency's Capital Investment Program.

Anyone interested in requesting that this hearing be convened for public testimony should contact Cynthia Weston, Planning and Development Division, by phone 238-4920 or in writing, 4012 S.E. 17th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97202 by Friday, April 29, 1983. A copy of the application for federal funding is available for public inspection in the Planning and Development Division.

John R. Post, Director
Engineering and Contracts

Sub-Bids Requested
The Jefferson West Apartments
IRL/HAP/SRO Project
Bid Date: April 25, 1983 at 4:00 p.m.
Hoffman & Hoffman Inc.
1888 SW Madison, Portland, OR 97205
(503) 228-2800
We are an equal opportunity employer and request sub-bids from women and minority business enterprises.

Sub-Bids Requested
Biltmore Hotel Renovation
Portland, Oregon
Bid Date: April 22, 1983, 3 p.m.
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(503) 692-0810
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Newcombe speaks here

Former Brooklyn Dodgers' pitcher Don Newcombe will be the special guest speaker at the Salvation Army's Adult Rehabilitation Center (ARC) awards banquet, April 25, at 7 p.m.

Newcombe, with Dodgers teammates Jackie Robinson and Roy Campanella, broke the color barrier in major league sports.

He now is a spokesman for the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. He also is the current advisor on alcohol and drug related problems to First Lady Nancy Reagan.

Newcombe will testify to his own struggle and victory over alcoholism.

Also during the banquet, sobriety awards will be presented to ARC residents who receive work therapy treatment at the center.

Special awards for alcoholism awareness will go to KATU-TV, for its January campaign, "Battling The Bottle," and to Oregonian reporter Jann Mitchell for her four-part series, "Alcoholism: The Horror, The Hope."

Nationally, The Salvation Army operates the most extensive residential alcoholism treatment program. In Portland, two Salvation Army officers, the ARC and the Harbor Light Center, work to help alcoholics.

For more information, call Captain Robert Engel at 235-4192.



Terry Cummings (left), the high scoring forward for the San Diego Clippers, has been named the Miller High Life/NBA "Rookie of the Month" for his superlative performances in March. Cummings, who attended DePaul University in Chicago, averaged 24.9 points and 11.7 rebounds in 15 games for the Clippers.